Business English 101

Supplementary Reading — Unit 5

Read through the interview. If possible, role-play with a classmate.

Also use the questions as practice for your own interviews.

Interviewer:	Good morning, thank you for joining us today. How are you doing?
Candidate:	Hello! Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me, I am doing well.
Interviewer:	That's great to hear. Shall we begin? Could you start by telling us a little about yourself and your background?
Candidate:	I grew up in a small town with many local businesses. I was always curious as to the how and why these businesses were succeeding. When I was at school, I opened my own businesses aimed at my fellow students, including a snack shop that I ran from inside my dormitory. This fuelled my interest in business and business strategies which is why I studied Business Science at College, and again set up a few small businesses in my community. At Big Fish Company, I have been working as a junior business analyst, and have been able to build up my experience.
Interviewer:	Wow, this really seems to be a passion for you! So why do you want to work with us?
Candidate:	Having been in my small town, I feel the opportunities for growth are limited. Researching your company and the role that I am applying for, I see that my skills of data analysis, business strategy, problem-solving and negotiation would fit this role and I believe I could add value to your company. I'm also ready to broaden my knowledge of business management at a bigger company.
Interviewer:	Those are certainly great skills to have. What are three words your family might use to describe you?
Candidate:	They would say that I am curious – I'm always wanting to know how or why something works. They would say I am a bookworm – I love to read in order to learn more and gain more insight into modern trends in the market and the world around us. They would also say that I am motivated – I've always got a project that I'm busy with and like to make sure it is produced to its highest potential.

Disclaimer: This resource has been made for the purpose of teaching English language learners. We know that students can be learning English in many different places, in many different ways and at age

Interviewer:	That's great. Do you like to work in a team? And what is one time where you haven't agreed with someone on your team?
Candidate:	I like to work in a collaborative team as I believe there are more ideas and creativity that can come from working with other people with the same goals. In my current job, a colleague and I disagreed on the direction of a project. We sat down with our manager and analysed pros and cons as well as possible final outcomes. We realised that combining both of the pros from our ideas would make for a better outcome, and we continued to work well together to finish the project successfully.
Interviewer:	Can you tell me about a very busy period you've experienced and how you handled it?
Candidate:	I had a big project that I was dealing with at work and at the same time one of my colleagues got very sick. I offered to take over her tasks . At that time my wife and I were also packing up and moving house. I found that creating a priority list for the day and allotting certain hours to get the tasks done really helped. Good communication during this time was key to make sure that things ran smoothly and that everyone was on the same page with regards to deadlines.
Interviewer:	Wow, you were really under pressure there. What do you think makes you the best person for this job?
Candidate:	My strengths lie in my people skills where I enjoy networking with people interested in business as well as working in a team effectively. Another strength of mine is the willingness to always learn new things to be able to achieve more and at a higher level. I am motivated and have a good grounding of skills and experience needed for this role.
Interviewer:	Those are good strengths. So then what would you say are some of your weaknesses?
Candidate:	I think, because I'm eager, I can sometimes take on many things at once and I like to jump right in. But I've found that using my priority list and keeping an organised record of things, I've been able to still stay on top of my work, despite sometimes causing myself some extra stress.

Interviewer:	That’s a wise strategy. What do you like to do in your spare time?
Candidate:	I like to play tennis. I am part of a tennis club which has been a great way to meet new people and stay active. We have a range of people with different skill levels, so it's great to help out those who are still learning and also get a chance to play a hard, competitive match. I also like to read and play in the garden with my family.
Interviewer:	That’s all my questions for today. Do you have any questions for me?
Candidate:	Yes, I’d like to know if there would be any training for people entering new roles? What kind of opportunities are available for personal and professional development at the company?
Interviewer:	Yes, we would have a few days for the new employees' onboarding where they would be briefed on the work expected in the role. And then we have monthly professional and personal development sessions that are optional for our employees.
Candidate:	That’s great that you look after your employees in this way.
Interviewer:	Yes, that is important to us. Well, thank you so much for coming in today, we have a few more candidates to see and we will be in touch with you shortly. Have a great day.
Candidate:	Thank you so much for your time, I look forward to hearing from you, goodbye.

Comprehension/Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think the interviewer starts with the question, “Tell us a little about yourself and your background?”

2. What two adjectives does the candidate use to describe his personality in response to the above question?

3. What skills does the candidate mention to the interviewer?

4. What skills/strengths is the interviewer looking out for when he asks the question about teamwork?

5. How does the candidate talk about his weaknesses?

6. Why do you think the interviewer is interested in what the candidate does in their spare time? How would this influence your answer in an interview?

7. Do you think it is important to ask the interviewer a question of your own, at the end of your interview? Why?